



**Open Report on behalf of Heather Sandy,
Executive Director – Children’s Services**

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	07 September 2023
Subject:	Children in Care Performance Report Quarter 1

Summary:

This item enables the Panel to consider and comment on the report and accompanying appendices to this report, that provide key performance information for Quarter 1 2023/24 that is relevant to the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Actions Required:

Members of the Panel are invited to consider and comment on the performance information contained in the appendices of this report and recommend any actions or changes to the Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety, Procurement and Migration.

1. Background

Appendix A provides a full and detailed report that covers the measures that are relevant to Children in Care (CiC) used by Children’s Services. This is available for questions.

There are 15 measures in total that relate to CiC that are reported on in Quarter 1. Of these measures four did not meet their target and one is ahead of the target set by the services.

1.1 Measures that did not meet their target:

1.1.1 Percentage of Children in Care with an up to date health check

The number of children in care has increased and there is evidence of more young people aged 16/17 entering care and exercising their right to refuse an assessment. These include young asylum seeking children who have come through the national transfer scheme. This age group of children are often not committed to accessing their health assessment, although they continue to access healthcare when required. The Children in Care Teams continue to encourage and promote health assessments with their young people but have to accept their right to refuse.

There has been a lot of activity to improve the timeliness of Initial Health Assessment and this measure has improved.

1.1.2 16-17 year old Children in Care who are participating in Learning

The Virtual School co-ordinates Personal Education Plans for all our 16 and 17 year old children in care, ensuring that every young person has a plan which is reviewed termly. These bring young people, their social workers, carers and providers together to focus on educational need, any potential barriers to participation in learning and ensures that our young people are supported appropriately. As some of our young people in care struggle to access or sustain engagement in learning, access to therapeutic support and/or alternative routes into educational opportunities are explored through the Personal Education Plan and may be supported by Post 16 Pupil Premium funding. Challenges in securing mid-year school places and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision for the increased number of recently arrived unaccompanied asylum seeking young people aged 16-17 has impacted on this quarter's performance. Interim tuition provision is commissioned by the Virtual School to ensure young people have access to learning whilst awaiting a place at an educational setting.

1.1.3 Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training (EET)

This measure remains below target but is moving in a positive direction and has improved. The Leaving Care Service continues to monitor every single young person who is not in EET. The Service continues to report monthly on the efforts of the service to re-engage individuals back into EET. Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) tracks this performance regularly and monitors those young people who fall into NEET (not in education, employment or training) and those that re-secure EET.

The Leaving Care Service is working with the Corporate Parenting Manager to look at the emotional wellness and the recovery of young people as this is the biggest barrier to engaging in EET, alongside the plethora of activity to support young people accessing EET. As mental health/emotional wellbeing is one of the biggest barriers to our young people accessing EET, the wellbeing worker and Mental Health professionals remain in post to offer additional support to those young people with poor mental health and those who are unable access to work. Individual wellbeing and recovery are central to improving the EET in the long term. The impact of these posts within the service was praised during the recent Ofsted inspection as an effective method of listening to what young people need, addressing their needs, and effectively reintroducing support and services to young people and overcoming barriers to remaining EET.

1.1.4 Children in Care Living Within A Family Environment

The current target for 2023-24 is 80%. At 76.3% this is performing just below the target range (77% - 82%). This measure has previously been within the target tolerance, but as the children in care cohort changes constantly, the figure does vary between quarters, and it is yet to be seen as to whether this is a temporary dip or part of a longer-term trend.

To illustrate how the figure can vary over quite short periods of time, at the start of June the figure stood at 77.4%, within the target range, whereas by the end of the month the figure had dropped to 76.3%, slightly below. Family placements are a continued focus for the Council as for many children in care, a family placement is deemed the most suitable means of offering care and maintaining children within their family networks. The Council continues to explore enabling children and young people to remain within their family or extended network if they cannot, for whatever reason, live with their parents. We are aware of the increased number of age assessments of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) which result in a non-family placement which will be affecting this measure. This is likely to continue to increase.

1.2 Measures that are ahead of their target:

1.2.1 Participation of Children in Care in reviews

There has been ongoing work to ensure reporting on Mosaic improved and this has now come to fruition. It is a cumulative measure and there will always be some young people who chose not to participate in reviews despite our best endeavours so the fact that we have exceeded the target is a testimony to the hard work in engaging young people in their care plans.

2. Conclusion

This report summarises the Quarter 1 performance for Children in Care and Young People, and Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are invited to review and raise any questions on its content and recommend any actions or changes to the Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety, Procurement and Migration.

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Children in Care - Performance Measures – Quarter 1

5. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Simon Hardcastle, Performance Support Officer – Corporate Transformation, Programmes & Performance, who can be contacted by e-mail at Simon.hardcastle@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

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